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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Support for Microsoft

I am a professional computer programmer with 25 years experience.
I am an independent consultant and I have never been paid by
Microsoft.

I have from day one believed that the anti-trust suit against
Microsoft is a farce and a travesty. It should never have occurred.
Software is simply a collection of ideas made manifest in a machine.
It is no more possible, in my mind, to claim that Microsoft is
a monopoly than it would be to claim that Stephen King monopolizes
scary books or Disney is a monopolist in the entertainment industry.

When I began in this business, it was dominated by large companies
who were far more dominant in their practices than Microsoft ever
was. It was almost impossible for independents such as myself to
afford the equipment, software and training that we would need to
function and stay current in that environment. Thanks to Microsoft,
I have my own business of which I am proud. At the same time that
my costs have decreased to perhaps a tenth of what they might have
been (not adjusted for inflation), the content and complexity of the
work has grown ten fold. Microsoft has provided me with a wonderful
business opportunity. I pay them, they do not pay me but I have
profitted
from my association and from having Microsoft in the world.

I believe that if Microsoft were to abuse its market position and raise
prices, they would loose business. It would not be hard to produce
a product that competes with them, replaces theirs. In fact such
products
do exist and are not really popular. These products fail because
the companies that produce them are badly run and not because of
predatory
practice by Microsoft.

Companies that it is alleged Microsoft has "injured" injured themselves
more than they were injured while others are so much larger than
Microsoft
they can scarcely claim injury. During the period it might be claimed
that Microsoft and Netscape were competing I found Netscape hard to
deal with, hard to place orders with, producing a demonstrably inferior
product and engaging in practices similar to those they claim for
Microsoft. Bottom line and in my professional opinion Netscape has an
inferior product and was a badly, arrogantly run company and this is
why they failed.

In regards to the notion that the browser can be removed from the operating system. This is superficially true but pragmatically irrelevant. As an analogy, one could remove the ability to play sounds on a PC easily enough but then many applications would fail to work. True, the operating system would work but not as a productive product. Similarly, as a technical question the browser could be removed. However, so many programs depend on the browser, not just those produced by Microsoft, that absolutely nobody would want a Microsoft operating system from which the browser has been removed. Help files would no longer work. Products that even compete with Microsoft such as Real Audio would no longer work. Almost nothing would work if Internet explorer were really removed.

As I said this is a farce and it should be simply ended in the most legally expedient way possible.

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